

HB6374  
 01182022  
 CT Council on Sexual Misconduct Climate Assessments

Provide brief preamble of approach taken by Council and resources delivered

Notes for preamble:

- In light of diversity of campus demographics and student needs, Council has decided to focus on giving campuses tools to find what they need among the existing landscape of resources.
- Note intentional use of term “assessment” in enabling legislation.
- Required vs. recommended elements of assessments

**Part 1: Survey topics**

Materials for this Council to produce:

**Gather survey instruments in one place:** [Challenge: Dissemination of multiple files]

- AAU 2019
- ARC3 2021
- HEDS? [Available to the public?]
- HERI? [Available to the public?]
- Rutgers?
- Brandeis

**Commented [1]:** Ali also shared Brandeis in our folder  
**Commented [2R1]:** I added Brandeis to this list.

**Provide table to summarize which existing survey instruments contain questions about each topic, required vs. recommended**

Required	Tools: Existing survey instruments that are available to the public					Other: non-survey; other assessment methods
	AAU	ARC3	HEDS?	HERI?	Rutgers?	
Required topics of campus assessment, quoting HB6374						
“Student awareness of institutional policies and procedures related to sexual assault, stalking and intimate partner violence”						
“If a student reported sexual assault, stalking or violence to an institution of higher education or law enforcement,						

**Commented [3]:** Cultural domain terms and labels should be highlighted for institutions so they can modify if needed. For example, ARC3 uses "Facebook" for digital violence, which may be useful for older and some international students, but may not resonate with younger, US based attendees.

Also, not all institutions in the state have a women's center, and most do not have a designated center or program for Indigenous students, but in asking the question of where students go to for support, it is important to consider all the options available to students for support, on and off campus. While some students may not want to respond to this question if they are concerned it would make them identifiable, providing a full list of options communicates to students that the institution acknowledges how important and critical these programs and services are for student wellbeing.

**Commented [4R3]:** These are great points. I added some call-outs related to them into the Issues to Highlight section just below.

the response to and results of such report”						
“Student perceptions of campus safety”						

Recommended	Tools: Existing survey instruments that are available to the public					Other: non-survey; other assessment methods
	AAU	ARC3	HEDS	HERI?	Rutgers?	
Additional topics for campus assessment. These are recommended for consideration (but not required), based on campus needs						
Prevalence rates:						
Sexual assault						
Sexual harassment						
Intimate Partner Violence						
Stalking						
Use of incapacitation as a tactic						
Student perceptions of risk; How problematic sexual misconduct is at institution						
Reasons not to report/use list of resources						
Demographics						
Efficacy of bystander prevention programming						
[?Guidance related to CT statutes around resources provided to students, such as <a href="#">PA 14-11</a> ]						
Attitudinal and/or behavior questions						
Risk of perpetrating						
Digital a/o online violence						
Cost of instrument: Free?						

Issues of assessment design to highlight

- Anonymity
  - Concern among respondents, marginalized communities
- Confidentiality
  - Level of identifiability by administrator
  - Felt identifiability

- Language used in an instrument
  - Pedagogical value for assessment participants: Assessments telegraph cultural values, policies, and specific resources available
  - Even if using a ready-made instrument, always review with your campus team (including students) for relevance of specific language

**Part 2:  
Implementation guidelines**

Enabling legislation:

“(3) recommend guidelines for the implementation of such assessments, which shall include, but need not be limited to, procedures for (A) achieving a high rate of response to such assessments to ensure statistically accurate survey results, (B) protecting the confidentiality of respondents to such assessments, and (C) receiving responses to such assessments from as broad and diverse a segment of the student population as possible; and (4) perform such other acts as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out the duties described in this section.”

“Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*)

(a) On or before March 1, 2023, and every two years thereafter, each institution of higher education in the state shall conduct a sexual misconduct climate assessment that collects the data points developed by the Council on Sexual Misconduct Climate Assessments, pursuant to section 2 of this act, and distribute such assessment to each enrolled student in accordance with the guidelines recommended by said council. An institution may use any sexual misconduct climate assessment, including, but not limited to, one recommended by the council or developed by an institution of higher education or a national association, provided such assessment collects all of the data points developed by the council.

(b) Each institution of higher education shall include with the sexual misconduct climate assessment a statement that (1) the identity of assessment respondents shall be confidential, (2) students should not disclose personally identifying information with their assessment responses, and (3) no assessment responses may be used as a basis of disciplinary action or legal proceeding.

(c) Not later than six months after the distribution of the sexual misconduct climate assessment pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, and every two years thereafter, each institution of higher education in the state shall post on its Internet web site (1) the campus level results of the sexual misconduct climate assessment, (2) its uniform campus crime report prepared pursuant to section 10a-55a of the general statutes, and (3) an Internet link to the report submitted to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education pursuant to subsection (f) of section 10a-55m of the general statutes, as amended by this act.”

Materials for this Council to produce:  
**“Implementation checklist”**

**Commented [5]:** Relatedly, is there a mechanism whereby the Council can support continuous improvement? Once the consumer information is posted and the summary reports delivered, is it possible to propose a program review process in line with the legislation?

- Using formatting, make it easier to parse the enabling legislation regarding school assessment requirements [Sec. 3., above]
- Add: suggested timeline

**Provide examples of confidentiality and anonymity statements**

- [Is this feasible?]

**Gather guidance documents in one place:** [Challenge: Dissemination of multiple files]

- AAU Data ecosystem
- SUNY Survey Development
- NASEM Harassment
- ARC3 Campus climate tip sheet
- BJS Technical Report
- Others?

**Highlight key implementation principles or issues:**

- Confidentiality and Anonymity
  - Topics of special concern to small groups, marginalized communities
  - Data storage and security
- Choice
  - Follow your institution’s principles of informed consent
  - All questions should be voluntary, with likely exception of age qualifier (18 and above, based on IRB guidance)
  - Make it clear that participants may leave an assessment at any time and answer as many or as few questions as they wish
- Timing
  - If possible, prioritize spring to enable more students to be included at age of 18 above
- Comparability
  - Over time
  - With peers

**Commented [6]:** One issue related to improved response rates will be for institutions to demonstrate their use of these data for campus improvement and resources for students. The Council can be advisory in helping institutions articulate how they are using these data and to what end.

**Commented [7]:** They should also check that they have been provided informed consent, even with the caveat that they can leave the survey at any time, and answer as many or few of the questions as they wish.

**Commented [8R7]:** Great points. I added this to the Choice bullets.

**Provide table to summarize which existing guidance documents contain information about particular topics**

Required	Reference Documents: Existing assessment guidance that is accessible to the public				
Quote enabling legislation HB6374	AAU D.E.	ARC3 C.T.S.	SUNY	NASEM	BJS T.R.
“procedures for (A) achieving a high rate of response to such assessments to ensure statistically accurate survey results”					
“(B) protecting the confidentiality of respondents to such assessments”					
“(C) receiving responses to such assessments from as broad and diverse a					

segment of the student population as possible”					
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Recommended	Reference Documents: Existing assessment guidance that is accessible to the public				
	AAU D.E.	ARC3 C.T.S.	SUNY	NASEM	BJS T.R.
Additional issues around assessment design and implementation					
How to assemble a campus project team					
Improving response rates, special topics:					
Non-monetary incentives					
Improving response rates on commuter campuses					
Others?					
Using inclusive survey language					
How to make use of the data collected					
Assessment methods other than online surveys					
Comparability: over time; with peers					
Using inclusive survey format (considerations for disabled students, also students for whom a language other than English would be one they are more comfortable using to answer questions of a sensitive and intimate nature)					
Resources for students: which ones to include in a list in an assessment					
Resources for survey-takers: offering support to students who experience distress during an assessment					
Demographics: which to include and how to select them					
Narrative/free text responses: how and when to include them; dealing with information collected					
Assessment impact on students: recognizing that assessment participation can be distressing, and how to implement assessments to be mindful of that impact					

**Commented [9]:** One issue related to student response and concerns for wellbeing will be care for those for whom the survey triggers emotional distress, etc and they are either from out of state, or international students, or otherwise cannot access resources in the local area after the semester. Campus offices need to be prepared for resource recommendations for students who do not wish to be, or cannot be, provided support/services post semester.

Another issue to consider, that came up in both the SHIFT study and our CQU study, was related to student respondents who found the survey distressing; students who had not necessarily experienced harm during their time at the institution deploying the survey, but had experienced violence either in childhood, at another institution, during military service, or at another point in time in their lives and expressed this distress. There will students who are not living in a campus property, and they may be experiencing violence in a current relationship or at the hands of a family member. In our recent CQU survey we had a number of respondents report on experiences of violence that happened during or before their time of enrollment, but had nothing to do with the institution per se.

**Commented [10R9]:** Demographic information should include parenting/caregiving status. Important to avoid assumption that students are a 18-22 year old cohort, unmarried/un-partnered and without children.

Also students may be experiencing violence unrelated to institution of attendance, but during the time they are a student--so this could include a fieldschool or summer program, during a faculty-led course or semester/year length study away, etc.

**Commented [11R9]:** These are great points. I tried to incorporate them into the grid as implementation topic breakouts.

In particular, I want to second the point about recognizing that it can be distressing for students to participate in assessments about sensitive topics. There are many steps that institutions can and should take to acknowledge and prepare for that potential. These range from the way we design an assessment, promote it, analyze and present the data, and crucially, to the way we make use of the data to improve our campuses.

**Commented [12R9]:** Super helpful reworking of all this, Lily. Thanks so much.

DRAFT

